19 March 1982

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FOR

PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

PROGRAM

The Today Show

STATION

WRC TV

NBC Network

DATE

March 8, 1982

7:00 AM

CITY

Washington, DC

SUBJECT

Colonel Muammar Qaddafi Interviewed

JANE PAULEY: Chris Wallace spent this weekend in the Middle East, where he got an exclusive interview with Libya's Muammar Qaddafi. Chris is in Rome this morning with the story.

CHRIS WALLACE: Jane, we are just back from Libya, where on Saturday night we spent an hour talking with Colonel Muammar Qaddafi. In the interview the Colonel said that there was no justification for a U.S. ban on Libyan oil imports. He also criticized Saudi Arabia, saying that it should cut oil production by two to three million barrels a day, and that failure to do so might destroy OPEC. And we asked him what he will do if U.S. warships return to the Gulf of Sidra, where last summer two U.S. planes shot down two Libyan jets.

COLONEL MUAMMAR QADDAFI: We will defend our country till the last drop of our blood and the last man and woman. We know we are a small country and America is a superpower. That is our duty. We don't want to invade America. We are not going to make war on the shores of America. But America is coming here. What we will do on this? We will do our duty.

WALLACE: And that is to fight?

COLONEL QADDAFI: Of course. If anyone comes to your country, in your home, what do you do in that case? When we attack your home, what you will do?

WALLACE: Qaddafi said throughout the interview that he wants good relations with the U.S. But he accused President Reagan of using Libya to distract the American people from U.S. economic problems.

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WALLACE: We interviewed Colonel Qaddafi Saturday night at the Azuzia (?) military compound in Tripoli. Qaddafi, who is the son of a Bedouin shepard, received us in a tent, where he seems many visitors. We had to submit a few written questions in advance, but the vast majority of the interview was spontaneous.

One thing we talked about was President Reagan's expected ban on Libya oil imports, and we asked Qaddafi whether that ban will hurt Libya.

COLONEL QADDAFI: Of course. And it is without -- as I said about other actions against my country done by president Reagan, it is also without any justification, this decision. And we are very, very sorry that it happens.

WALLACE: He says that you export terrorism. He says you send people over to try to shoot at him and other American officials.

COLONEL QADDAFI: We [unintelligible] to hear all the word. If anyone has an incident and the proof against us, we want to see this proof against us. And we are sure that this is not true.

WALLACE: The U.S. Government continues to talk about the Libyan hit squads. CIA Director Casey says that they still pose a threat to President Reagan. Do they?

COLONEL QADDAFI: We laugh when we hear about this allegation, and we heard about it a long time before, but without any proof from America. Who are these people who want to kill Reagan?

WALLACE: The CIA Director, Mr. Casey, said this week that training terrorists is the second largest industry in Libya, behind oil.

COLONEL QADDAFI: [Laughter] It is a joke.

WALLACE: I don't think he meant it as a joke.

COLONEL QADDAFI: It is evident that it is.

WALLACE: They say that there are at least 16 camps where you train terrorists.

COLONEL QADDAFI: Where?

WALLACE: They say Sebha, in the center of the country.

COLONEL QADDAFI: [Laughter] You know, you have the permission to go around Libya and to see any camps of terrorism, any groups being trained for this action. And if you find this, you have to say to the people and to the world we are terrorist.

WALLACE: You say it doesn't exist?

COLONEL QADDAFI: Of course.

WALLACE: There are no camps?

COLONEL QADDAFI: Go everywhere. If you find any camps training terrorists -- how do you believe this propaganda? You believe it in America. Are you very simple people to believe any propaganda from Zionist side or any other enemy of our country?

WALLACE: Colonel, I get the feeling that what we in the West call supporting terrorism you would call supporting revolution. Is that -- is it just a question of words, that you support revolution and we call that terrorism?

COLONEL QADDAFI: Well, however, there is big difference between terrorism and revolution.

WALLACE: And what is the difference?

COLONEL QADDAFI: A revolution is a revolution of the people who has a just cause, struggles to get independence [unintelligible].

WALLACE: And you can bomb individuals and civilian populations? Is that revolution?

COLONEL QADDAFI: No. We support the cause of the just cause, just cases, cause of peoples who are fighting for independence.

WALLACE: And if that involves putting bombs in stores?

COLONEL QADDAFI: If it is due to them, these details.

WALLACE: This detail?

COLONEL QADDAFI: These details, it is due to them.

And we are...

WALLACE: Some would say that's not a detail, but morality.

COLONEL QADDAFI: The people of Libya, for example, they support these people. But if these people, by support to anything

that you may consider it terrorism, it is not our responsibility.

WALLACE: The U.S. has asked Americans to leave Libya because they are worried that you might take them hostage. Do you promise that you will take no American hostages?

COLONEL QADDAFI: Of course. Of course I give my promise. And no one will hurt them. They will be under our protection. They are our guests, and we respect them, we cooperate with them. They must be not afraid at all in our country. They are living in peace here, more than in America.

WALLACE: This week you accused Saudi Arabia of conspiring with the U.S. to glut the oil market so that Libya would not be able to sell its oil. If that is so, won't that destroy OPEC?

COLONEL QADDAFI: Maybe. Yes, it is a very bad -- very bad oil policy. [Unintelligible] may need to destroy OPEC. We hope Saudi Arabia will reduce the production of its oil until two or three million barrel a day.

WALLACE: If the Saudis don't cut production, what will you do? Will Libya have to cut the price of its oil?

COLONEL QADDAFI: We may be obliged to do this, unfortunate. Because it is a very difficult problem because of this -- of the situation created by Saudi Arabia.

WALLACE: Would you like to see the Saudi Royal Family toppled?

COLONEL QADDAFI: If they don't correct their policy, it is better to disappear.

WALLACE: Colonel, do you trust the Soviet Union?

COLONEL QADDAFI: Of course.

WALLACE: You do.

COLONEL QADDAFI: Yes, I do.

WALLACE: In spite of the invasion of Afghanistan? In spite of martial law in Poland?

COLONEL QADDAFI: [Unintelligible] Poland is Poland. And Switzerland is Switzerland.

WALLACE: And you see no connection?

COLONEL QADDAFI: What is [unintelligible] in Poland,

it is the responsibility of Poland.

WALLACE: If the U.S., if the United States did something like that, wouldn't you call that imperialism?

COLONEL QADDAFI: Like what?

WALLACE: You see no responsibility for the Soviet Union in the martial law crackdown in Poland?

COLONEL QADDAFI: Yes. It is the responsibility of Poland [unintelligible].

WALLACE: And, Colonel Qaddafi, I must tell you I am a little surprised to hear how restrained you are. We always hear in the West that you're a madman.

COLONEL QADDAFI: [Laughter]

WALLACE: Why aren't you acting like that? You seem very restrained today.

COLONEL QADDAFI: [Laughter]. Yes, it isn't as you say.

WALLACE: What do you think when you, as I no doubt you have heard, American officials calling you a madman, a killer? Former President Carter called you subhuman.

COLONEL QADDAFI: I think his accusation didn't come from a qualified doctor. [Laughter]

WALLACE: Finally, Colonel, there are millions of people who will be watching this interview. Is there anything you would like to say, any final statement you would like to make?

COLONEL QADDAFI: I think I have to say I am a friend to all peoples in the world. I want to be friend to America and I want to establish -- to see good relationship between my country and with the United States of America, as it exists now between my country and other countries.